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Agenda item 8

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 23 April 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Please find enclosed herewith three official memorandums issued by the Palestinian National Authority on:

1. The recent Israeli escalation against President Yasser Arafat's compound.

2. Sharon's plans against President Yasser Arafat's headquarters.

3. The continued Israeli escalation and barbaric aggression against the Palestinian people.

I would be grateful if you could have the three mentioned memorandums* distributed as official documents of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights, under agenda item 8.

(Signed): Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

* Reproduced as received in English only.

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ANNEX

MEMORANDUM TO ALL NATIONS

We would like to bring your attention to the following recent Israeli escalation against President Yasser Arafat's compound:

1- the Israeli occupation forces created a buffer zone around President Arafat's compound, all roads leading to the compound have been closed and cut by cement blocks, ditches, dirt blocks, and barbed wires that turned the compound into prison.

2- The occupation forces continue to jam all kind of communications with the President's compound.

3- On April 22, 2002, the Israeli Government prevented the Palestinian delegation from attending the meeting between President Arafat and U.S. Under Secretary William Burns.

These measures and practices indicate that the Israeli Government is determined to pursue the destruction of the Palestinian Authority, including a real threat on the life of its elected President Arafat.

This could be the next phase in Sharon's War against the Palestinian people, for in the first phase he destroyed the Palestinian civilian and security infrastructures.

The plan to liquidate the Palestinian Authority and its elected President and the destruction of all Palestinian institutions, may be followed by Israeli illusions to create an alternative leadership in order to carry out the surrender of the Palestinian people, especially that the Israeli Government cancelled all agreements signed, including "A" areas which were effectively transferred into "B" areas.

We call upon all of you to confront and stop these dangerous developments, especially that the new stage of the Israeli aggression will be to harvest political gains of the state terror and the war crimes committed against the Palestinian people, institutions, cities, villages, refugee camps and our holy Christian and Muslim sites.

This dangerous development is parallel to the Israeli Government continued siege of the church of Nativity in Bethlehem and the prevention of water, food and medical supplies from reaching 200 people including priests and nuns inside the church.

A MEMORANDUM TO THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION

The statement attributed to the President Bush on individuals present at the President's Headquarters, and whom Israel wants to arrest in violation of agreements signed, such statements could be exploited by the Sharon's government and used as a pretext for executing plans against the President's Headquarters. We would like to clarify that the mentioned persons have been actually in prison, as they were arrested on 21/2/2002 in the city of Nablus and they were transferred to Ramallah, in coordination with guarantees from Israel, US and Europe, and with the knowledge of Egypt, Jordan, Russia and the UN. Hence, all what has been said on this issue contradicts with these guarantees secured by the US. From the legal point of view, the agreements signed with Israel do not grant it the right to ask for such a demand, as they are still under investigation and will be prosecuted in Ramallah as soon as the situation returns to its normality. This issue has been discussed with Mr. Colin Powell in the last meetings and we provided him with such facts and he did not argue on this.

We would like to pay your attention on this issue and to be aware of the repercussion of any aggression on the President's Headquarters in the near future. We call upon all Arab and International Parties to intervene for halting these Israeli plans, which are ready for execution against the President's Headquarters and against the Nativity Church in Bethlehem.

We are ready to cooperate with you on the two issues, namely the President's Headquarters in Ramallah and the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. We would like to thank President Bush once again as well as the efforts of the Secretary Powel in this difficult stage that overwhelms the entire region.

Ramallah 19/4/2002

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Ramallah, 20/4-

The terrorist Israeli occupation continue its escalation and barbaric aggression against our Palestinian people, his Christian and Islamic shrines and his institutions. They also continue to perpetrate the most heinous crimes by targeting and ransacking Palestinian houses & launching the biggest arresting campaign forcing the detainees into Nazi detention camps. In addition to the burning & ransacking of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Nablus: The Israeli barbaric occupation forces committed this evening a heinous crime against a whole family, when a military jeep deliberately run over their vehicle killing three children, the brothers Khairy and Ra'fat Bassam Shehada Awwad (11 & 13) and their cousin Farraj Hikmat Odwan (4) and critically injuring their father and brother Ahmad. Since noon, Nablus is exposed to sporadic fire by the terrorist Israeli occupation forces deliberately damaging houses & burning several vehicles and stores. Also, Ahmad Ibrahim Abu Hashish was killed when the occupation forces attacked him and destroyed his house in Ein Beit Alma'. It is worth mentioning that there are several injuries among our people.

Jenin & Salfeet: Rescue teams continue its field attempts in Jenin refugee camp to help in the rescue and recovery operations, but the existence of landmines, bombs and missiles placed by the Israeli forces hinder their attempts, where a doctor from the Red Cross lost his leg by an explosion of a landmine. Besides, three Palestinians were picked alive from under the rubble in Hawashine neighborhood in the camp. In Salfeet, where a stifling blockade is imposed, three Palestinians were wounded when the occupation forces opened fire at Palestinian houses. Also, the Nazi Israeli occupation continue its stringent blockade on all Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps, in addition to the storming of houses and arresting of Palestinians. The occupation battle tanks invaded Jayyous village, Rafah and Beit Hanoun and opened fire at Palestinian houses injuring twenty-one Palestinians many of them critically.

The occupation forces intensified its military presence and snipers around the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and placing ladders in preparation to storm it. The occupation forces continue to impose stifling siege on the church, firing bombs at it and at all monasteries and churches preventing food & medical supplies and cutting off all means of communications. They also continue to break in Palestinian houses and arresting Palestinian residents in Beit Jala & Beit Sahour cities & Dhaisha, Eida and AL Izza refugee camps. While in Ramallah, the occupation forces intensified its activities by erecting barriers & checkpoints and deployed armored personnel carriers around the Presidential headquarter.

This is the Nazi Israeli terrorism that shows no respect to the sanctuary of this land and its shrines. Under official Islamic & Christian silence to all the crimes committed on a daily basis against our Palestinian people who defend with strong belief and steadfastness his land and holy shrines till victory and independence and the establishment of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital on the land of peace, religions and holy to all.